



Lincoln Public Schools

Mary L. Sterling, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

To: School Committee
From: Mary Sterling, Rita Trotta, Linda Lipton
Re: English as a Second Language (ESL) Program
Date: April 1, 2010

Background

Services for our English Language Learners (ELL) have been available in the district for a long time in the form of some direct tutoring for students whose first language was not English and who were in the process of learning English. In 2005, the Department of Education in Massachusetts required the district to assemble documents and submit a program description, following state guidelines, as part of the Coordinated Program Review. This work was accomplished under Paul Naso's leadership with Rita Trotta, who was the ESL teacher. The process resulted in a strong program definition that complies with state requirements for procedures and service, including eligibility, assessment, parent notification, and service delivery. Over several years, many classroom teachers have received professional development in working with English Language Learners.

In 2008-09, Linda Lipton joined the program as a part-time teacher of ELL students on the Hanscom campus. Currently, Rita Trotta works full time with ELL students on the Lincoln campus; Linda works close to full time on the Hanscom campus. Enrollment fluctuates because of transitioning students. During the 2009-10 school year, enrollment has averaged about 30 students.

Questions and Information about Lincoln's ESL Program

1. What are all the components of the ESL program in Lincoln?

Our program on both campuses provides initial screening and preliminary assessment to identify students who may need services. Once students are determined to be eligible, certified ESL teachers deliver direct services to students individually or in small groups. The ESL teachers also collaborate with classroom teachers to provide resources and supports for Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) instruction in the regular classroom. Our ELL students participate not only in the MCAS, but also in the annual state-mandated assessment for ELL: the MELA-O and the MEPA. For more detail, see Appendix: *Program Overview* and *List of Acronyms*.

2. How do we identify a student who may need ELL services?

At time of registration, families complete a Home Language Survey. This survey gives the district information about the language background of students and their families. It also indicates whether parents are able to receive school communications in English and whether

they require translation or interpretation services. Once we determine that a student may need services, we conduct a preliminary assessment through teacher interview and record review. Then, if warranted, we determine eligibility by administering Stanford English Proficient assessment (SELP). For more detail, see Appendix: *Home Language Survey*

3. How are parents notified of the need for ELL services?

If the results of the SELP indicate eligibility for ELL services, the ESL teacher sends a notification letter home to parents. This letter provides results of the SELP and describes the ELL services that will begin. The state requirements include a notification letter along with a statement of the Parents' Rights and Procedures so that parents are well-informed about their right to decline services. We send a continuation letter home each year, if the student is still eligible. Parent letters are available in their home language. For more detail, see Appendix: *Parent Notification letter and Parental Rights and Procedures*

4. What are the home languages of our English Language Learners?

Currently, there are 16 home languages among our ELL students: Chinese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Korean, Bangla, Hungarian, Japanese, Haitian-Creole, Hindi, Chammarro, Romanian, Dutch, German, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

5. What are the different levels of proficiency of ELL students and how are those levels used?

A description of proficiency in English for an ELL takes several forms. First, there are state standards of proficiency, described in an extensive document titled, E.L.P.B.O., and organized in four levels: *Beginning*, *Early Intermediate*, *Intermediate*, and *Transitioning*. Massachusetts has recently developed five levels with a simply number designation: 1 is the least proficient and 5 is the most proficient. The SELP and our own Lincoln Progress Report uses slightly different level designations. Our ESL teachers track all the ELL students with the different leveling systems to make a determination of frequency of services based on a composite of the level of proficiency. For example, a student at a "beginning" or "1" level receives services five days a week, whereas a student who is "transitioning" or "5" might receive services once or twice a week, depending on specific need. For more detail, see Appendix: *English Language Learner Proficiency Levels*

6. How do we assess the progress of our ELL students?

As a result of our work to comply with the state's requirements in the Coordinated Program Review, we developed a comprehensive assessment plan which tracks performance on state assessments and targets key skill areas for our ELL students: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing. The ESL teachers use this plan to meet assessment points through the year, which are also correlated with the assessments given in the regular classroom, such as the district writing prompt. For more detail, see Appendix: *Assessment Plan for English Language Learners*

7. What determines the length of time ELL students typically participate in our program?

The length of time an ELL student needs program services depends on many variables; the most important is the entering level of proficiency. For a student who is non-English speaking at the outset, it usually takes 1-2 years to learn conversational English. However, in order to be successful in school, ELL students take 4-7 years to acquire academic English in all four dimensions: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Some researchers believe that it takes an even longer time for ELL students to “catch up” to the academic proficiency of their peers who are native English speakers. Other researchers note a trend of ELL students who reach an intermediate proficiency and then stall in their forward progress and do not achieve proficiency on state-level tests in English Language Arts. Academic vocabulary is a significant variable: the gap is already wide in kindergarten and continues to grow. Typically, our ELL students are in our program for a minimum of two years; many continue with adjustments in amount of services depending on their gains in proficiency. Our exit criteria for the program rely on several measures: MCAS scores, MEPA scores, re-evaluation with our ELL assessment instruments, and success in grade level tasks. For more detail, see Appendix: *Academic Requirements of Language*

In our verbal presentation at the School Committee meeting on April 8, 2010, the ESL teachers will each present a case study to illustrate who their students are and how they make progress with our services.

Appendix:

- Program Overview
- Common Acronyms
- Home Language Survey
- Parent Notification of ELL Services
- Parental Rights and Procedures
- English Language Learner Proficiency Levels
- Assessment Plan for English Language Learners
- Academic Requirements of Language

English Language Learners in the Lincoln Public Schools

English Language Learners (ELLs) are students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English. Students receive this designation if they are also unable to perform ordinary class work in English. The term ELL is used interchangeably with the term LEP (Limited English Proficient). The following information summarizes the process used to identify and support ELL students within the Lincoln Public Schools.

Identification

HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

Parents complete the LPS Home Language Survey when their children are registered.

TEACHER SURVEY

If needed, a Teacher Survey is distributed to classroom teachers to identify any students teachers have reason to believe use a language other than English at home.

Based on Home Language and Teacher surveys a decision may be made to begin the preliminary assessment.

Preliminary Assessment

TEACHER OBSERVATION FORM

The form is used to document classroom difficulties that new or continuing students may have due to limited language proficiency.

RECORD REVIEW

The purpose is to determine if newly enrolled students have previously had ELL status and whether there are data in the record pertaining to language proficiency.

Based on preliminary assessment a decision may be made to begin eligibility determination.

Eligibility

STANFORD ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

When we are prepared to determine eligibility, we administer the Stanford English Language Proficiency test. It is a 4-part assessment including speaking, listening, reading and writing components.

PARENT INFORMATION

Parents are contacted to inform them that their child is being assessed for ELL eligibility. We may request a brief interview (by phone or in person) to receive background information concerning the child and inquire about any translation support the parent may need for school-related information.

If the student is determined eligible for ELL status, a program is designed.

Program Components

SHELTERED ENGLISH IMMERSION (SEI)

State and federal laws require that ELL students receive instruction that is designed specifically to assist them both in learning English and in learning subject matter content. Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) is the required program model for most ELL students. SEI has two components:

English as a Second Language (ESL)

instruction---explicit, direct instruction about the English language intended to promote acquisition of English and help students "catch up" to student peers proficient in English.

Sheltered Content Instruction---instruction that includes approaches, strategies and methodology that make the content of the lesson more comprehensible to students who are not yet proficient in English.

State Assessments

MELA-O

The Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral is the oral part of the state assessment. The student is rated on fluency, vocabulary, pronunciations and grammar. The student's ability to produce and comprehend English language in the classroom is the focus.

MEPA

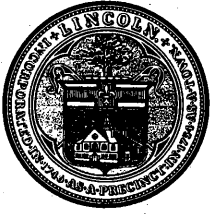
The Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment is the written part of the state assessment. It covers reading and writing skills and is given over a two-day period. All 3rd grade ELLs and students in 4-8 who are new to the ELL program take the MEPA in the fall. In the spring, all ELLs in grades K-8 take the MEPA.

Exiting Program

Results from MELA-O, MEPA, MCAS as well as in-district evidence that the student is meeting the DOE "Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners" are factors in determining when an ELL student is exited from the program. When that occurs, parents are informed, and the student is monitored for two years. Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP) is used to designate students who at one time were classified and reported as ELL/LEP, but who subsequently met the district's English language proficiency criteria.

Common Acronyms Used in the Instruction and Assessment of English Language Learners in Massachusetts

Acronym	Definition
MCAS	Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System
MEPA	Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment
MEPA-R/W	Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment-Reading/Writing
MELA-O	Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral
QMT	Qualified MELA-O Trainer
QMA	Qualified MELA-O Administrator
SEI	Sheltered English Immersion
MATSOL	Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages
MABE	Massachusetts Association of Bilingual Educators
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
LEP	Limited English Proficient
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
ELBPO	English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes for English Language Learners



Lincoln Public Schools

Ballfield Road Lincoln, MA 01773 (781) 259-9400

English Language Learner (ELL) Program Home Language Survey

Student's Name: _____
First Middle Last

School: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____
City State Country

Year student entered U.S.A. _____ Year student first attended school in U.S.A. _____

The Massachusetts Department of Education requires that school districts collect information for each student regarding the language(s) spoken at home. We use this information to help create meaningful and appropriate instruction for students. If a language other than English, or in addition to English, is spoken at home, Lincoln Schools are required to do further assessment of the student.

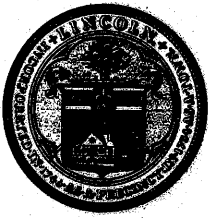
1. What language did your child first learn to speak?	
2. What language does your child use most often at home?	
3. What language do you most often use to speak to your child?	
4. Does your child understand a language other than English?	
5. Has your child been influenced by a language other than English by someone such as a grandparent, babysitter, or other adult?	
6. What other languages, if any, are spoken by the adults at home?	
7. Does your child read in a language other than English? What language?	
8. Does your child write in a language other than English? What language?	
9. Are you able to read communications provided to you in English?	
Will you require translated information or interpreter services?	

Parent's Signature

Date

Parent's Phone Number

Parent's e-mail



Lincoln Public Schools

Ballfield Road Lincoln, MA 01773 (781) 259-9400

English Language Learner (ELL) Program Parent Notification of ELL Services

Date _____

Dear Parent /Guardian:

Through our Home Language Survey which you completed, we have learned that your child speaks/understands a language other than English. Massachusetts and Federal laws require assessment of your child's English language proficiency. Therefore, the Stanford English Language Proficiency Test was administered. The results are given below.

	Emergent	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
Listening	_____	_____	_____	_____
Speaking	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____	_____
Writing	_____	_____	_____	_____

Based on these results, your child is considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). Therefore, he/she will begin services in the English Language Learner (ELL) program. ELL support will increase your child's success in school. The areas of instruction will be English oral language expression, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and writing skills. Instruction will be accomplished in small groups, pairs, or individually. We will use the sheltered English immersion model, which may take place either within or outside your child's regular classroom.

As a parent, you have several rights concerning the services we offer. These rights are explained on the Parental Rights and Procedures page. You may keep this page for your own use. Please contact us if you choose to waive or decline these services.

You are invited to request a conference where our ELL program objectives will be explained. You are welcome to observe in the classroom. At any time, you may call the school and leave a message for me, or you may reach me by email at trottar@lincnet.org. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss our ELL program and your child's language needs.

Sincerely,

Ms. Rita Trotta, ELL/ESL Teacher
Phone (781) 259-9408 x1124

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND PROCEDURES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER ENROLLMENT

The Lincoln Public Schools are committed to ensuring that every English Language Learner (ELL) student receives meaningful access to an appropriate educational program. Parents of ELL students have legal rights to decline entry into the ELL program provided within the school setting. The school district encourages parents to allow their children to participate in the English Learner Education (ELE) program for a limited time before they make a final decision. If the decision to opt out of the program is made, it must be done in writing.

Parents who have chosen not to enroll their child in the ELL program must be kept informed of their child's progress in the classroom setting. The child is continually monitored and progress is reported to parents through the traditional means of parent conferences with the classroom teacher. If it is felt that the child is not progressing, the school system is obligated to assure that English language and academic needs are met. This is done in several ways, including the training of academic teachers in second language acquisition and sheltered English instruction, further assessment by the ELL staff, and consultation amongst all staff involved with the student's academic program.

Parents who have opted out of the program have the right to request the enrollment of their child at a later date if they feel academic progress shows need for ELL support. This must be done in writing.

English Language Learners, who wish to participate in or receive some other type of language support, may not do so unless they have received a waiver from the requirement that English learners in Massachusetts be instructed through the use of sheltered English immersion.

This document is available in the home language. Contact: Assistant Superintendent, 6 Ballfield Road, Lincoln, MA 01773; 781-259-9402

English Language Learner Proficiency Levels: Descriptors from Several Sources

Descriptors for the levels of proficiency of students who are learning English as a second language vary depending on the assessment instrument or standards.

ELPBO Standards:

Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Transitioning

SELP Assessment Levels:

Pre-emergent, Emergent, Basic, Intermediate, Proficient

Massachusetts State Levels 1-5, Reported on the MEPA:

- 1 Student has not yet developed simple written and spoken communication in English.
- 2 Student has developed simple written and spoken communication in English.
- 3 Student communicates in English and uses the language in the school context.
- 4 Student is moderately fluent in English and uses the language in the school context with few or minor errors.
- 5 Student communicates effectively in English and uses the language in the school context with few errors.

Lincoln Public Schools ELL progress report:

Beginning, Emerging, Developing, Expanding, Bridging

**Lincoln Public Schools
ESL Program**

Assessment Plan for English Language Learners

Massachusetts			-----LINCOLN - BASED ELL ASSESSMENTS -----				
	MELA-0	MEPA	SELP	RIGBY Speaking Listening	RIGBY Writing	Spelling Inventory	Teacher Directed
Sep			Determine Eligibility For ELL	All ELLs Speaking, Listening Until Proficient		ELL Grade 3 - 6 Spelling Inventory: Primary or Elementary	Ongoing/Selected Observations Checklists Anecdotes Assignments
Oct	New ELLs in 4-8 & current K-3	New ELLs in 4-8 & All in gr. 3			All ELLs Writing		
Nov – Dec			Reassess current students as indicated		Complete Writing		Continue during year to Inform Instruction
Jan - Feb						ELL Grade 3 - 6 Spelling inventory	Grades 6-8: Reading & Writing using MEPA MC & OR questions

**Lincoln Public Schools
ESL Program**

	MELA-0	MEPA	SELP	RIGBY Speaking Listening	RIGBY Writing	Spelling Inventory	Teacher Directed
Mar-	All ELLs, K-8	All ELLs K-8					Ongoing/Selected Observations Checklists Anecdotes Assignments
April							Continue during year to Inform Instruction
May - June			Exit criteria for possible FLEP	Repeat Rigby tests as indicated	Repeat Rigby tests as indicated	ELL Grade 3 - 6 Spelling inventory	

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS OF LANGUAGE

Related to the idea of communicative competence is Cummins's definition of two levels of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).⁷ Cummins notes that many misconceptions about students' abilities, capabilities, and even basic intelligence are related to the way in which "language proficiency" has been defined. Specifically, students' conversational fluency in English is often (mistakenly) taken as a reflection of their overall proficiency in the language. To address these misconceptions, Cummins clarifies "the fundamental distinction between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency."⁸

BICS Basic interpersonal communication skills involve using language for social, face-to-face, everyday situations. BICS tends to be very contextualized, providing abundant clues to comprehension. It refers to basic fluency in the language, and it is something students acquire relatively quickly, usually within two years.

CALP Cognitive academic language proficiency involves language skills and functions of an academic or cognitive nature. This is the language needed to accomplish academic tasks. There are fewer context clues, and students must draw meaning from the language itself. CALP typically takes much longer to acquire, usually about four to seven years.

You May Have Heard . . .

You may have heard teachers at your school saying, "Why does he still need English language instruction? He speaks English very well. Listen to him talking to his friends at lunch. He talks all the time." When asked how the student is functioning academically, the response is, "He's below grade level and not doing well, but the problem must be something other than language." This student has acquired BICS—conversational fluency—but has not yet achieved CALP—full academic language proficiency in English. What he needs is more time for focused academic language development.

In school contexts, students must utilize CALP as well as BICS to succeed academically. Students who appear to have achieved nativelike conversational skills in English may take several years before they match their native-English-speaking peers in academic English. This is largely because English speakers are also developing their language proficiency at the same time. In essence, we're aiming at a moving target and must provide accelerated instruction for English language learners to close the gap.